

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendments, claims 1-8 and 10-16 are pending in this application, with claims 1, 10 and 12-16 being the independent claims. Claim 9 is canceled. Claims 10-16 are amended. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action dated March 26, 2004, claims 9-11, 15 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly unpatentable over Armitage, U.S. Patent No. 4,781,386. Claims 1-8 are allowed. Claims 10 and 12-14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Allowed claims 1-8

Applicant thanks the Examiner for allowance of claims 1-8.

Allowable claims 10 and 12-14

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating the allowability of claims 10 and 12-14. These claims have been rewritten in independent form, as suggested by the Examiner, and are believed to be in condition for allowance.

The rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 15 and 16 have been rejected based on Armitage. These rejections are respectfully traversed. These claims are directed to the use of self-lubricating coatings.

This aspect is not disclosed in Armitage. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of claims 15 and 16 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Dependent claim 11 depends from claim 10, and is allowable at least because claim 10 is allowable, as well as due to the features recited therein.

Claim 9 has been canceled, and its rejection is now moot. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of this claim in a continuation application.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicant believes that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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